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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1881
INFO RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
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RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY 4783
RUEHRN/USMISSION UN ROME PRIORITY 0214
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 6400
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0981

UNCLAS ROME 000393

AIDAC
SIPDIS

STATE PLEASE PASS TO USAID/DCHA/OFDA: RANDREW

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DISASTER DECLARATION CABLE: ITALIAN EARTHQUAKE

REF: STATE 116623

¶1. (U) This is a Disaster Declaration cable. Please see paragraph 3.

¶2. (U) On 6 April at 3:30 a.m. an earthquake with a magnitude of 5.8 hit Abruzzo province in central Italy. Fifty people have been confirmed dead and thousands are homeless. Media reports indicate that electrical and water systems suffered extensive damage, particularly in l'Acquila, the earthquake's epicenter. PM Berlusconi has declared a state of emergency. As of noon on 6 April there have not been any reports of American casualties.

¶3. (U) Post requests use of the Ambassador's fund, in the amount of \$50,000, to provide humanitarian assistance. Charge has determined that this is a major disaster for Italy and has received assurances that Italy would accept non-military aid. US funds are needed and would be put to good use. Other countries have already announced assistance packages and it would be embarrassing if the US failed to offer assistance. The Italian Red Cross will be issuing an appeal later in the day on 6 April. Post understands that the affected communities face many pressing needs for shelter, medical care, reconstruction, etc. Funds would be used to help meet these requirements.

DIBBLE